

# ESL Conversation Groups that Work

Laura Stanton

# Conversation Cards / Partner Activity

For the next 5 minutes:

- Introduce yourself to your partner.
- Take turns asking each other the questions on the cards. Both should answer each question, but alternate who goes first. (You may not finish all the cards.)

# Conversation Cards / Modifications

## For Beginners:

- Focus on fewer questions
- Review possible responses
- Play “concentration” with answer cards

# Conversation Cards / Modifications

For Advanced:

- Ask follow-up questions
- Create dialogs
- Write new questions/create surveys
- Sort into categories

# Agenda

- Teaching v. Facilitating
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Getting Students to Talk
- Making Corrections
- Reviewing a Sample Lesson

# Teaching v. Facilitating

With your partner, take 3 minutes to brainstorm what is different between teaching a class versus facilitating a conversation group.

# Teaching v. Facilitating

- A teacher delivers information. A facilitator fosters discussion.
- Establish Climate of acceptance.
- Students do 80% of the talking
- Facilitator keeps everyone involved
- Balance flexibility and focus

# Recognizing Non-Verbal Cues

- Facial Expressions
- Body movements and posture
- Gestures
- Eye Contact
- Touch
- Space
- Voice



We all need to gather our possessions and move to another building.

# Cultural Sensitivity

- Err on the side of being conservative.
- Observe student behavior for clues
- Ask students what is okay for them.
- If you have the opportunity, research the learner's country. (Try the Cultural Crossing website. <http://guide.culturecrossing.net>.)

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Web www.culturecrossing.net



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**gwynnie bee.**  
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<p><u>GREETINGS</u></p> <p><u>COMMUNICATION STYLE</u></p> <p><u>PERSONAL SPACE &amp; TOUCHING</u></p> <p><u>EYE CONTACT</u></p> <p><u>VIEWS OF TIME</u></p> <p><u>GENDER ISSUES</u></p> <p><u>GESTURES</u></p> <p><u>TABOOS</u></p> <p><u>LAW &amp; ORDER</u></p> <p><u>VIDEOS &amp; OTHER STUFF</u></p>	<p><u>DRESS</u></p> <p><u>TITLES &amp; BUSINESS CARDS</u></p> <p><u>MEETINGS</u></p> <p><u>NEGOTIATIONS</u></p> <p><u>GIFT GIVING</u></p> <p><u>MISCELLANEOUS</u></p>	<p><u>CLASS RULES</u></p> <p><u>SOCIALIZING</u></p> <p><u>MISCELLANEOUS</u></p>

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# Getting Students Talking

Work with the person on the other side of you (new partner) and spend 3 minutes brainstorming strategies for encouraging students to do the talking.

# Getting Students Talking

- Fish bowl exercise
- Whole group/small group/pairs
- Vary Ability Levels
- Involve non-speakers
- Change topics
- Assess during and after lesson

# Making Corrections

- Modeling
- Note Patterns of Errors
- Focus on what interferes most with communication
- Balance positive and negative comments.



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## Mini-courses for Adult Literacy Students



Literacy NJ has created three new mini-courses for students. This project was funded by a Literacy Innovations grant from the NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Scroll down to download the mini-courses and to read feedback from tutors and students.

### Talking up a Storm: Activities for ESOL Conversation Groups

#### Lessons

We created Talking up a Storm to help programs establish ESOL Conversation Groups. The lessons were written by experienced conversation group leaders in order to help tutors who are new to leading conversation groups get started. We also hope that some of the lessons or activities can be useful to experienced group leaders who are looking for new ideas. This curriculum consists of eight, two-hour lessons. The lessons are designed for Intermediate and Advanced ESOL students.

[Click here to download Talking up a Storm \(pdf\).](#)

#### Pilots

Talking up a Storm was piloted in 16 locations throughout the state by Literacy NJ and our affiliates.

[Click here to read the feedback from tutors](#) and [click here to read the feedback from students](#).

Destination: U.S. Citizenship

## Upcoming events

- [2015 Literacy for Life Professional Development Conference](#)  
10/24/2015 - 9:00am to 4:00pm
- [Tutor Training in Edison](#)  
11/10/2015 - 12:00pm to 3:00pm

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